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AUTHOR Hutinger, Patricia: And Others
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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the curriculum in the Macomb (Illinois) 0-3 Regional Project for rural handicapped and high risk infants and toddlers is described. Assumptions about the child, interaction among child and project adults, and about the conditions necessary for learning are examined. The core curriculum is said to have been developed from biyearly goals so that existing curriculum activities could be cross referenced with evaluation tools used by the project. The numbering system is explained, and a list of visual, auditory, sensory, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, language, self help, and social behaviors in the core curriculum is appended. (CL)

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Macomb 0-3 Regional Project
Rural Child/Parent Service
27 Horrabin Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

BABY BUGGY

Curriculum Development in [illegible] onal Project

Pat[illegible]
U[illegible]
Julie[illegible]

June, 1978

ED132402

Project Director: Patricia L. Hutinger, Ed.D.

College of Education • 27 Horrabin Hall • Western Illinois University
Phone: 309-298-1634 or 309-298-1072
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The Macomb 0-3 Regional Project is a demonstration project originally funded in 1975 by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped. During the three year project, a model for service delivery was developed which provides services to handicapped, high risk, and/or developmentally delayed young children (ages birth to three) and their parents who reside in rural areas. Services are educational/remedial in nature and are primarily delivered by means of home visits to families made by Child Development Specialists (CDSs).

The purpose of the present paper is to present information regarding curriculum development in the Macomb 0-3 Regional Project, first outlining basic assumptions about the nature of the young child as a learner and the conditions necessary for learning to occur, then describing the characteristics of the Core Curriculum. In addition, an account of the development and actual use of the Core Curriculum is also included.

The Project was funded to develop a program that could be used in rural communities with a home-based delivery system. In addition, the curricular approach was (and continues to be) developmental, integrating activities based on implications drawn from Piaget's work, Montessori's approach, current information on language acquisition, as well as other areas related to the literature of child development and handicapping conditions. Consultation with appropriate members of the helping professions, medical community, and parents is also integrated into the curriculum approach for children. Incorporation of the aspects noted above in planning programs for children under the age of three is not an impossible task. When the task is complicated by the need to record activities and child behavior in a form which can be stored, analyzed, evaluated, and retrieved by computer, however, it becomes somewhat more complex. The Project's earliest work made use of activities listed in the Vort Behavioral Characteristic Progression Charts (BCP) in order to organize curricular activities/child behaviors into a computer numbering system.

In the third year, the Core Curriculum was developed as an organizational design for establishing Bi-Yearly curriculum goals. Goals designated as child behavior or skills (i.e., "The child uses two-word utterances"), comprise the Core Curriculum. In conjunction with the curricular goals, activities which lead to the attainment of goal skills can assume a variety of forms. Both goals and activities are an important part of the Core Curriculum, even though only the goals are numbered for computer use. Although the BCP charts contained some appropriate behaviors for handicapped or high risk children from birth to three, many areas of behavior were not covered effectively for an infant and toddlers' program, especially in the areas of language and sensorimotor development. Normal development in the areas of motor, language, social skills, self-help skills and cognition must be used as guidelines in planning for very young children, even if they happen to be handicapped.

Macomb 0-3 Regional Project
June, 1978

Basic concepts for working with young children under three may be found in the Project's sharing center curriculum, Have Wagon: Will Travel. Curricular activities in the Macomb 0-3 Regional Project are based upon several basic assumptions about the child as a learner as well as the conditions for optimal learning (i.e., interaction between the child, CDS, and parent and specific teaching strategies).

Assumptions about the Child

1. The handicapped or delayed child passes through stages of development similar to the typical child. However, the handicapped child passes through developmental stages at a slower rate.

2. Among children, even those with similar handicapping conditions, there exists a wide range of individual variability. Education/remediation activities must account for individual differences.

3. Careful observation of the child's behavior (What can the child do?) is an important determiner of curriculum activities in addition to formal means of evaluation and assessment.

4. Successful activities are developed when they capitalize upon the behaviors the child exhibits and then carry the behavior a bit farther.

5. The child's exploration and manipulation of objects must be sought and encouraged, since this is the way the child establishes concepts and actions for dealing with the worldand the people in it (i.e., physical knowledge).

6. Autonomy on the part of the child in taking part in or directing his/her own learning experience is vital to the development of the cognitive processes of assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration, as well as healthy personality development.

7. Motor activities help the young child acquire both information and skill for dealing with himself/herself, objects, and other people.

8. The child must have many opportunities for experiences and enrichment in his/her environment.

9. Since the young child learns by observing others, imitative play activities are useful and must be encouraged.

10. Slightly discrepant materials (i.e., materials that contain familiar elements in conjunction with slightly novel elements) are useful for producing changes in behavior.

11. Materials which help the child develop cause and effect relationships help the child establish the notion that he/she has an effect upon his/her environment.

12. A child needs plenty of time to observe before he/she enters into an activity. Observation is an important learning strategy for the young child.

13. Children acquire social knowledge through interaction with other people; therefore, opportunities to watch and interact with other children and adults in encouraged.

14. Although a child may be involved in a single activity, skills in several developmental areas are usually involved. For example, although playing with wooden blocks may be defined as a gross motor skill, it can also provide for social interaction, concept development, and language development.

15. The young child learns many things through play activities. Adaptation, experimentation, and imitation are fostered through play experiences.

16. Many behaviors are hierarchical in nature. The child incorporates an early skill into a more complex skill or knowledge as he/she grows.

Assumptions about the Interaction among Child, Parent, CDS

1. Since the parent or primary caretaker is with the child for a greater period or time than anyone else, parents can initiate the greatest influence on the child's development. For this reason, helping parents become more effective is essential.

2. Establishing rapport and trust with parents and child is an essential goal for the CDS.

3. When a parent begins to acquire skill in working with the child, and knowledge of specific strategies and appropriate materials, the CDS should encourage the parent to assume more responsibility and activity during home visits and sharing centers.

4. Interaction among child, parent, and CDS should move toward positive, open communication, appreciation, thoughtfulness and concern.

5. Goals for child behavior must be established jointly by parents and CDS, in coordination with information from other appropriate sources. It is important to include the parents' desires for the child in developing a curricular program for that child. This results in the parent feeling that

working with the child is meaningful; consequently he/she is apt to be more willing to work with the child. If the parent's goals are unreasonable for the child, there are ways of working around them, still helping the parent feel involved yet more realistic about the child's achievements.

6. Modeling appropriate behavior results in learning on the part of both parent and child. The CDS must be aware that she serves as a good model in her work with the child and family.

Assumptions about the Conditions Necessary for Learning

1. Materials used in curricular activities must be appropriate for the developmental level of the child. Health and safety considerations are essential in selecting materials.

2. Individually planned activities for each child in a caseload are imperative. Some activities can be used with children who are developmentally similar in a particular area, but certain activities will be specific to a single child, depending upon that child's abilities.

3. Throughout the curriculum activities planned for a child, emphasis is placed on what the child can do.

4. Activities for the child remain flexible and child-directed during the home visits and sharing centers, rather than being rigidly structured by the adults or incorporating a "teacher-lesson" approach. The child's interests and spontaneous behavior provide guides to planning appropriate activities.

5. Sufficient time for the child and parent to observe materials, activities, and other people should be provided.

6. Environments in which interaction can occur should be pleasant and non-threatening.

7. Input from consultation with other professionals is necessary to make appropriate plans for individual children. Evaluations made by physicians, occupational or physical therapists, speech and hearing clinicians, and other members of the helping services must be sought and taken into consideration when making curriculum plans.

8. A variety of materials and activities can be used to accomplish a specific goal and also to establish schemas for dealing with objects and activities. In other terms, a variety of "instances of the concept" are necessary to provide adequate opportunities for experiences so that the child can generalize responses. For example, balls or blocks of different sizes,

texture, weight and color can be used to establish the concept of "ball" and of the actions that go with a ball with a variety of stimuli.

9. Arranging the environment for a child, while it requires careful planning, results in many opportunities for the child to learn independently, without direct adult instruction. Preparation of the environment is necessary in order to provide for optimal development.

10. Work should be carried on at the eye level of the child, even if this means lying on the floor.

11. Talking to the child is important even if the child cannot talk.

Considerations in Development of a Curriculum

The assumptions listed above are considered when the CDS makes her plans for a home visit with any child and family. They are, in reality, an operational framework from which decisions are made. In addition, the activities must fit into the computer-based evaluation system listing goals used by the Project. For this reason, an organizational plan for a Core Curriculum was developed.

It is recognized that there is a hierarchical structure to the developmental activities that form the means for attaining particular skills or behaviors in a child. Some behaviors are subsumed in more complex behaviors. For example, "unwrapping a candy bar" involves several fine motor skills: the pincer grasp, use of both hands together, and visual-motor skills. The organization of the Project's present Core Curriculum is not numbered to reflect such a hierarchical structure.

Curriculum development has been threefold: developing new activities and materials for infants (until recently a field sparsely covered); integrating known activities which are consistent with the Project assumptions; and developing a workable approach to integrating activities with the computer-based assessment and records used to record child behaviors. All children do not progress through all curriculum activities. Since individual children have different goals, they in turn are involved in different curricular activities. The very nature of the diverse population in a rural community, with a wide variety of handicapping conditions as well as different developmental levels, necessitates such an approach.

The Core Curriculum was developed as an organizational pattern for the Project's existing curriculum activities so that they could be cross-referenced with the evaluation tools used by the Project. The purpose was to determine whether or not the evaluation instruments were appropriate for evaluating the Project's successes. The results of the cross-referencing are contained in Baby Buggy Papers #161 and #162.

Individual activity plans are made by the CDSs for each child in the Project, based on the child's Bi-Yearly Goals. Curriculum activities selected are developmental in nature.

Bi-Yearly Goals consist of a list of the goals that the parents and the CDS have jointly determined that the child needs and is ready to accomplish. The goals are written three to four weeks after the child enters the Project and are evaluated every six months thereafter. Further discussion of the Bi-Yearly Goals may be found in Baby Buggy Paper #164.

Why Develop a New Curricular Organization?

Initially, behavior goals for children were pulled from the BCP. Some readers may find the use of the BCP inconsistent with the basic assumptions stated at the beginning of this paper. Since the Project was designed to demonstrate some of the behavioral components in the Piagetian framework, constant effort was made to find points where commonalities existed. Some activities during sensorimotor stage of Piaget are found in other classification systems labeled "fine and gross motor," while "cognitive" behaviors are sometimes labeled "intellectual." Common points shared by the BCP and a Piagetian approach were used in developing curriculum plans.

The BCP charts were designed as a guide for working with school-aged handicapped children rather than children from birth to three. Although at times the charts were helpful to the CDSs in the generation of Bi-Yearly Goals, they were primarily used to provide a numbering system for the Project's computer analysis process. In February, 1978, the staff decided that because the Vort BCP charts were both time-consuming to use and often of little help in determining individual Bi-Yearly Goals, a more efficient system was needed. The following objectives for devising an organizational pattern for the Core Curriculum were agreed upon in the development of the Core Curriculum.

Objectives

1. Include activities that are developmental, even though they are not arranged in hierarchical order.

2. Keep the curriculum organizational pattern simple - make it easy to use.

3. Make the curriculum organizational pattern flexible - allow for new goals to be added as needed.

4. Make goals easy to locate - limit the number of major areas and place each goal in the most logical area.

5. Make some arrangement for special goals - be adaptable to children with unique problems.

Procedures in Developing the Core Curriculum

The Bi-Yearly Goals of all children served during the second and third years of the Project were pulled from each child's permanent records. Each goal was then entered onto a master list. The list was edited by two CDSs who eliminated duplicates and combined similar goals. For instance, the two goals, "The child walks up stairs with two feet on each step" and "The child walks up stairs alternating feet," were combined into one, "The child walks upstairs."

After the master list was edited, each goal was classified according to the following categories: Visual, Auditory, Sensory, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Cognitive, Language, Self-Help, and Social. These categories were chosen because they coincide with the categories used in the Bi-Yearly Goals. They are also generally accepted as one way of categorizing developmental characteristics. At the same time, it was recognized that arbitrary placement of a skill or activity in one category produces inherent error.

Each goal selected for the Core Curriculum was placed in only one category, though logically it might fit into more than one. A number of overlapping goals were examined. For example, "The child points to named objects" could be placed in the Language category, since such an activity is a part of receptive language. On the other hand, it could also be entered in the Cognitive category because a thought process is involved (comprehension). Theoretically the distinction between language and thought is subject to a great deal of argument among experts, with no absolutely clear guidelines. The above goal was listed in the Cognitive category since it seemed to be more closely related to competence rather than production. Cross referencing each goal, placing it in every possible category where it fits, was determined to be an unwieldy process which would result in an overly complex Core Curriculum. Since one of the objectives in creating a new organizational pattern for the curriculum was to keep it simple, each goal was classified into only one category on the basis of staff judgment and agreement.

The Core Curriculum needed a numbering system to enable it to be functional in the computer analysis program. In order to eliminate any major program changes, the numbering system was modeled after the BCP chart numbers. Each goal is assigned a six-digit number. The first two numbers designate the category or major area. The second two numbers represent the goal number within that category. The third set of numbers is reserved for an individual task analysis, which can be adapted to the child's needs. For example, the number 06.10.00 indicates that the goal is in the Cognitive area (06) and that it is the tenth goal (10). The Core Curriculum lists this goal as, "The child matches like objects." If the CDS wanted to be more specific about the goal and/or task analyze it, she would use the last two numbers to indicate the individual analysis. For example, 06.10.01 might mean, "The child matches

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two like objects out of a group of five." The task analysis does not need to be the same for each child. Project children are not compared to each other; therefore, it is not necessary for their goals to be identical. The flexible system for task analysis allows the Core Curriculum to be totally individualized to meet each child's specific needs.

The goals within each category were not arranged in a hierarchical order, although they are developmental in nature. Therefore, the curriculum has an added dimension. It is simple and flexible, and also open-ended. This means that if a CDS wants to use a goal that is not on the curriculum, she can add it to the list of goals in the area and assign it a computer number. Thus, the new goal becomes incorporated into the Core Curriculum.

However, in order to keep the Core Curriculum simple, goals that most probably will not be needed by more than one child are not included. Instead, a special numbering system is used for unique goals. The first two numbers from 90-99 indicate a special program. The second two numbers represent the goal or activity. The final two numbers are used for task analysis of the goal or activity. For example, 90.04.00 would indicate the fourth goal in special program number ninety. Each special program is assigned a different initial set of numbers; the number 90 therefore would indicate one specific special program. See attachment A for a detailed sample of a special program.

To avoid confusion, a master list of the Core Curriculum and special programs is maintained by the Project secretary. New goals and special programs are recorded, thereby eliminating the possibility of two CDSs using the same set of numbers for two different goals. A copy of the Core Curriculum may be found at the end of this paper. (See Attachment B.)

Cross Referencing

When the initial Core Curriculum was completed, it was cross-referenced with the assessment scales used by the Project. Staff members are able to use this cross-referenced list to help generate and implement individual Bi-Yearly Goals for their children. Baby Buggy Papers #161 and #162 contain a cross-reference of items on the Alpern-Boll, REEL, and Uzgiris-Hunt Ordinal Scales with items in the Core Curriculum. For example, the Core Curriculum defines the activity, "Classifies objects," as a goal. The REEL defines similar activity as "Recalls and associates new words by category." The Alpern-Boll lists this same activity as "Group things together by color, form, or size."

Summary

The above description of the evolution of the curriculum in the Macomb 0-3 Regional Project is intended to serve as a procedural guide for individuals

working with a very young handicapped population. It offers one alternative to "rediscovering the wheel" in development of a curriculum organizational pattern.

Attachment A: Sample of special goal program

Child's name and number: _____

CDS's name and number: _____

Long Range Goal: The child performs a simple task using both hands--left hand dominant.

Number _____

BYG No.	Activities to chart:
90/01/00	1. The child removes pegs from a pegboard.
90/02/00	2. The child places pegs in a pegboard.
90/03/00	3. The child pours beans, etc. from one container to another.
90/04/00	4. The child throws a large ball.
90/05/00	5. The child turns pages of a book.
90/06/00	6. The child makes a mark on paper.
90/07/00	7. The child paints with a brush.
90/08/00	8. The child spreads paste on paper.
90/09/00	9. The child strings beads.
90/10/00	10. The child cuts paper.
90/11/00	11. The child screws a lid.
90/12/00	12. The child unscrews a lid.
90/13/00	13. The child catches a ball.

ATTACHMENT B: CORE CURRICULUM

Visual

Behavior	Number
Follows moving object with eyes and head horizontally.	01/01/00
Follows moving object with eyes only horizontally.	01/02/00
Follows moving object with eyes and head diagonally.	01/03/00
Follows moving object in circular path.	01/04/00
Looks at hands.	01/05/00
Fixates on object.	01/06/00

Auditory

Attends to dominant sound.	02/01/00
Turns toward source of sound.	02/02/00
Looks directly at speaker.	02/03/00
Reacts positively to soft-toned sounds.	02/04/00
Startles in response to sudden loud sound.	02/05/00

Sensory

Picks up object and sticks in mouth.	03/01/00
Picks up object and throws it.	03/02/00
Transfers object(s) from hand to hand.	03/03/00
Bangs together two objects held in hand.	03/04/00
Manipulates object.	03/05/00
Experiments with new objects using more than one sense.	03/06/00
Explores wet objects/substances.	03/07/00

Gross Motor

Pulls self to standing position.	04/01/00
Sits from standing position.	04/02/00
Rolls ball while seated on floor.	04/03/00
Stands.	04/04/00
Walks forward.	04/05/00
Holds head steady and erect.	04/06/00
Turns from side to back.	04/07/00
Turns from stomach to back.	04/08/00
Turns from back to side.	04/09/00
Squats.	04/10/00

Gross Motor, cont.

Behavior	Number
Catches ball.	04/11/00
Walks up stairs.	04/12/00
Walks down stairs.	04/13/00
Throws ball.	04/14/00
Jumps.	04/15/00
Maintains balance.	04/16/00
Gallops.	04/17/00
Creeps while flat on stomach.	04/18/00
Crawls on hands and knees.	04/19/00
Bends over to pick up objects.	04/20/00
Walks pushing object.	04/21/00
Walks pulling object.	04/22/00
Sits.	04/23/00
Walks backward.	04/24/00
Walks sideways.	04/25/00
Runs.	04/26/00
Kicks ball.	04/27/00
Bounces up and down in sitting.	04/28/00
Climbs onto chair or small wheel toy.	04/29/00
Completes sideways roll.	04/30/00
Reaches across midline.	04/31/00
Supports self on elbows.	04/32/00
Bounces ball.	04/33/00
Shifts weight on extended arms to reach.	04/34/00
Reaches to midline.	04/35/00
Moves toward new object.	04/36/00
Bends and regains balance.	04/37/00
Cruises.	04/38/00
Crawls up and down stairs.	04/39/00

Fine Motor

Builds tower of blocks.	05/01/00
Strings beads.	05/02/00
Places round object in hole.	05/03/00
Unscrews lid.	05/04/00
Places pegs in pegboard.	05/05/00
Removes pegs from pegboard.	05/06/00
Screws lid.	05/07/00
Makes a mark on paper.	05/08/00
Holds small object with fingers.	05/09/00

Fine Motor, cont.

Behavior	Number
Turns pages of book.	05/10/00
Makes random cuts in paper.	05/11/00
Achieves rolling motion with palm of hand.	05/12/00
Takes objects out of container with one hand.	05/13/00
Squeezes objects.	05/14/00
Picks up small objects between thumb and index finger.	05/15/00
Pushes or pulls small object.	05/16/00
Spreads paste on paper and puts another paper on top.	05/17/00
Puts objects in container.	05/18/00
Paints.	05/19/00
Uses simple hand movements.	05/20/00
Uses wrist in side-to-side movement (ring bell).	05/21/00
Cuts paper.	05/22/00
Holds object in fist.	05/23/00
Moves hands in unison.	05/24/00
Drops objects from grasp.	05/25/00
Extends fingers.	05/26/00
Pours from one container to another.	05/27/00

Cognitive

Points to named body parts.	06/01/00
Does simple puzzle/formboard.	06/02/00
Attends to book (pictures).	06/03/00
Points to named object.	06/04/00
Follows simple commands of one or two parts.	06/05/00
Classifies objects (color, size, shape, etc.)	06/06/00
Arranges objects in order of size from smallest to largest.	06/07/00
Reproduces number, direction, and color of pegboard design.	06/08/00
Attends to simple task.	06/09/00
Matches like objects.	06/10/00
Identifies self (in mirror or picture).	06/11/00

Language

Blows.	07/01/00
Responds to name.	07/02/00
Gestures to simple verbal requests.	07/03/00
Names familiar objects.	07/04/00
Uses pronouns me, my, and mine.	07/05/00

Language, cont.

Behavior	Number
Points to or places objects (above, below, front, back, around, through, etc.).	07/06/00
Makes consonant sounds.	07/07/00
Refers to self by first name.	07/08/00
Repeats simple words.	07/09/00
Vocalizes pain or pleasure.	07/10/00
Responds to vocal sounds.	07/11/00
Sucks liquid through straw.	07/12/00
Points to family member on request.	07/13/00
Vocalizes spontaneously.	07/14/00
Babbles with vocal play (ba-ba-ba).	07/15/00
Plays speech gesture games.	07/16/00
Imitates sound play.	07/17/00
Uses pronouns appropriately.	07/18/00
Uses noun phrases.	07/19/00
Uses predicate and noun phrases together.	07/20/00
Watches speaker's mouth.	07/21/00
Opens and closes mouth in imitation.	07/22/00
Makes vowel-like sound.	07/23/00
Uses jargon speech.	07/24/00
Uses sound for object/person (wa for water, ba for bottle).	07/25/00
Talks to self using rhythmic speech pattern.	07/26/00
Puts words together.	07/27/00
Presses lips together in imitation.	07/28/00
Moves tongue.	07/29/00

Self-Help

Attempts toilet training.	08/01/00
Finger feeds.	08/02/00
Spoon feeds.	08/03/00
Drinks from cup.	08/04/00
Dresses self.	08/04/00
Undresses self.	08/05/00

Social

Reaches for familiar people.	09/01/00
Responds to smile.	09/02/00
Offers toys to person but does not release.	09/03/00
Takes turns.	09/04/00
Plays alone.	09/05/00
Parallel plays.	09/06/00
Plays cooperatively.	09/07/00